

Bharata and the fine art of Mixing Structures

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Bharata, with whose work I shall be concerned in the present paper, is the purported author of the "Natyasastra" an ancient text on dramatics. I speak of him as "the purported author" because modern scholarship doubts his authorship of the text. It questions whether this huge tome of about 6000 verses was written by a single author. Tradition calls this author Bharata.

My purpose here is not to discuss the authorship of the "Natyasastra", though my discussion may be seen to have a tacit bearing on the question. What I propose to do in this paper is to study the "Natyasastra" in the light of the three concepts we have decided to reflect upon, namely, "system", "Structure", and "discourse." A significant way of doing this, I think, would be to try and understand Bharata's enterprise as an interesting answer to two related questions. One, "What happens to structures which are parts of different, distinct wholes- we could say systems - when these structures are amalgamated to form quite another whole or system?" And secondly, "How to formulate a "sastra", that is a theoretical scheme of discourse, for this new

resultant whole, given a context where the different structures transposed into this new whole are already formulated into systems with well-defined "sastras" of their own?" These somewhat long-winded, obscure sounding questions will, I hope, become clear as I proceed to discuss the answers to them that we can deduce from Bharata: as we begin to discern, that is, Bharata's ¹ formal and conceptual moves towards formulating a "sastra" concerning "natya" or theater, and the framework of ideas and forms within which he makes his moves.

Let me begin with "rasa" - with which all aesthetics in India ends. We have become used to thinking of "rasa" as a master concept which demarcates the field of all aesthetic experience and discourse. This was a later understanding of "rasa", which though founded on Bharata, who was the first man to use the term for aesthetic discourse,¹ differed markedly from his use of the notion. "Rasa" for Bharata, was not a conceptual tool for demarcating and discoursing about aesthetics as a general sphere of experience distinct from others. This was move made a thousand years after him by Anandavardhana and especially

Abhinavagupta. For Bharata, "rasa" was a principle through which different, discrete fields of aesthetic activity, each with its own separate canons, goals and conceptual schemes of discourse, could be combined into a single composite, unified whole. "Rasa", moreover, was not one but many- Bharata always speaks of "rasas", in the plural - meaning that different fields could be differently combined to form different wholes with distinct flavors, that is, distinct "rasas". A "rasa" was what made a whole hang together as a composite body combining disparate parts and this could be successfully done in more than one way- hence many "rasas". The task Bharata set himself was unusual. The modern analogy that comes to my mind is to think of his task as an endeavor to discourse on the film as an art. Most of us would grant that the film is a distinct art-form. Yet it is obviously a composite art. It has carved a separate niche for itself by combining different arts, skills and techniques into a single separate whole. And, importantly, it is a new art that combines arts and skills, such as music, literature, acting, which not only constitute independent arts with established aesthetic fields of their own, but they are also arts with their own distinct frameworks of consciously articulated discourse and aesthetic canons. The film, for these reasons, provides a better analogy for understanding Bharata's task than does drama. We have become used to taking the script of the drama for the drama itself, as we constantly do, for example, in the classroom. Aristotle, the prime guru of Western aesthetics may be regarded as partly responsible for this. He considered the plot as the main element of a drama. The various aspects of performance were, for him, dispensable.¹⁴² The plot can be expressed in a script, not the performance. For Bharata "natya" without "prayoga" - performance - would have been "kavya" or literature, not drama. This, for us, is true of the film, which we hardly ever confuse with its script. Further more, Bharata was writing of theater as

a new art, created by combining already existing art such as the film palpably is.

For any one who might want to construct a distinct framework of concepts for discoursing on film, both its newness and its palpable composite quality will present special problems and he can, I think, benefit from Bharata's model. For Bharata too was talking of a composite art, newly created, and in a context where the different arts his "natya" combined were sophisticated arts in their own right, accorded independent aesthetic status and formulated through independent analytical frameworks. This posed for Bharata a special set of problems and gave a special texture to his conceptual frame work suited to a truly new and composite art. "Rasa", we have seen, was for Bharata the principle through which different arts could be successfully combined into a single whole. Another comparison with Aristotle might throw more light on the nature of "rasa" and its aesthetic intent. Like Bharata, Aristotle's major concern in his "poetics" is with drama. Aristotle also talks of drama, mainly tragedy, as a composite art, speaking of the different media it combines. Mark, further, the parallel in Aristotle's concept of "mimesis" - imitation - and Bharata's concept of "anukarana" which may also be translated as "imitation." But Aristotle has nothing parallel to "rasa". The reason was that for Aristotle all art, and not just drama, was imitation - imitation of human action. Thus, though drama was composite, it was composed of similar entities- all aiming at imitation. This was also the reason why Aristotle could pick one of the elements - the plot in the case of drama- as the most characteristic, the most essential part of drama. For Bharata, however, not all art was "anukarana". The most prestigious forms of dance and music that he had inherited, structures from which he transposed into his theater, were acknowledgedly non-representational arts; they did not aim at "anukarana" of "lokasvabhava" (the human condition). The problem for Bharata

rather was, how were different arts, which do not share the goal of "anukarana" with drama, to be so associated with it as to become an integral part of it - to become "uparanjaka" to it, to use Abhinavagupta's expressive term. "Rasa" was the principle of making and judging the 'rightness' of such associations.

Consider the metaphor Bharata uses for explicating the notion of "rasa". "How can one suitably illustrate the concept of "rasa" through an example?", he asks. And then answers: "'rasa' should be compared to drinks like "sadava" (Literally, "a mixture of six") produced by combining qud with different "vyanjanas" and spices." "Rasa" for Bharata was clearly an art of making a good mixture, a smooth cocktail mixing different drinks - as the word "vyanjana", translated by Abhinavagupta as "liquid," suggests. In his gloss on the word "sadava" Abhinava points out that its flavor is quite distinct from the flavors it combines, "madhura" (sweet), "tikta" (sharp), "amla" (sour), "lavana" (salt), "katu" (bitter) and "kasgva" (astringent) taken singly or in a mechanical mixture.^{1/3}

Bharata repeatedly speaks of the mixed character of "natya". The very first chapter contains the following statement : "There is no field of knowledge, no craft, no art, no application, no activity which is not to be seen in "natya"."^{1/4} He voices the same idea towards the end of his work, just before he begins to speak of music and the forms it takes in theater. He speaks here of "natya" as "vidhasraya", "that which depends on many." The whole verse where this phrase occurs is pertinent to his notion of theater as a composite art. He says : "Song, instrumental playing and "natya" which is "vidhasraya" should be rendered like an "alata-cakra" (a flaming torch so rotated as to appear like an unbroken circle of fire),"^{1/5}

Abhinava again has an interesting gloss. "To call "natya" "vidhasraya" © depending on many © he says, is to say that "natya" is a mixture of many distinct activities so distinct that they

need to be apprehended through different sense-organs.¹⁴⁶ These have to be carefully combined into a single whole so that to the mind of the audience they appear as one single object. The flame of a torch in an "alata-cakra" does not simultaneously appear at different points of space: skill alone makes it appear so through the achievement of an equilibrium. Similarly a theatric performance consists of different activities that have to be skillfully brought together into a single equilibrium (samyapadana)."¹⁴⁷

Bharata was aware that the different activities he was combining into a single "alata-cakra" was each a world in itself with a distinct universe of discourse. He begins talking about the "natya" proper in the sixth chapter of the "Natysastra". Earlier chapters were introductory both to the subject matter and the actual "natya", which began with a ritual-like "purvaranga" (literally, "that which precedes the staging"), described in chapters four and five. With the sixth Chapter begins the formal "sastra" of the "natya". a "sastra" formally began with a catalogue of the major concepts and categories that together described and articulated the field to be surveyed. Such a catalogue, a conceptual itinerary of what was to follow, was often termed "uddesa". Bharata calls it "sangraha" © "a collection." Introducing the "sangraha", he says: "It is difficult to say everything about "natya" in its entirety. Why? Because it consists of many fields of knowledge ("jnana") and an infinite variety of skills (silpa). Even a single field of knowledge is like an ocean in itself, difficult to cover in all its essentials ("arthatattvatah"), what to speak of many."¹⁴⁸

Not only was Bharata aware of different "oceans of knowledge," to use his own phrase, he was also aware of their theoretical formulations. He deals at various lengths with a great variety

of subjects all of which were together needed to build up "natya•.

He begins with architecture, in the sense that the second chapter of the "Natyasastra• contains an expert description of the "natya°grha•, the theatre©hall. I have called it an expert description

because it is couched in technical language and shows awareness of architecture as a "sastra•, an organized scheme of discourse.¹⁴⁹

He describes a number of possible structures of various sizes and shapes, recommending those with the best acoustics and the best view of the stage for all viewers.¹⁴¹¹⁴⁰ More integral to the theatre itself was the division of the stage©space into separateÜd1[1]Ü sections, known as the "kaksya©vibhaga• (described in chapter 13).

"Natya• for Bharata was a representation of "triloka• all three worlds, of gods, men and demons. The "kaksya©vibhaga• divisions symbolically transformed the stage into the cosmos, allotting separate space to separate "lokas•; and since it was the world of men that was to be mostly represented, the "kaksya©vibhaga• divided the stage into different geographic categories such as the city, the village, the forest, the mountain, the river and the like.

More interesting for my purpose, however, are the transformations that were needed to make the arts of performance, music, dance and the arts of language, © speech, poetry, narrative, © integral to "natya• and how these transformations have been conceptualized.

Let me take up three of these to illustrate three different ways in which Bharata orchestrates the given material into "natya• and the conceptual tools he uses for the purpose.

I will begin with what Bharata calls the "pathya•. "Pathya• may be translated as "dramatic speech." Bharata includes it in his "sangraha• list as an essential element and concept in theatre,¹⁴¹¹⁴¹ which it obviously is. the literal meaning of "pathya• is "that which is to be read out". The reference is to the script, to be

spoken by the actors performing a play. The science of speech, that is, phonetics as a discipline concerned with the articulation of the sounds produced in uttering a language was already a sophisticated science in India centuries beforeÜd1[1]Ü Bharata, who is placed in the beginning of the Christian era. This science, known as "Siksha", grew out of the need of properly pronouncing Vedic "mantras", and had become commonplace in any study of language. Panini writing his grammar in the sixth or fifth century B.C. assumes this science as given. The science analyzed speech sounds, "varnas", into vowels, consonants, semivowels and sifted these on the basis of the physiology of speech production © such as the different places the tongue moves to in articulating different sounds (called "sthana") © and the different kinds of respiratory effort needed for pronouncing them (termed prayatna). These have now become commonplaces of modern linguistics too, and, indeed, the modern science was inspired in this by the ancient when the West took up the study of Sanskrit. This science deals, however, only with the right articulation of speech©sounds. What theatre requires is more. It requires "evocative" articulation of speech. Dramatic speech can not be, to use a phrase from Abhinava again, "like reading out a book." It rises and falls, bellows, whispers, whimpers, whines, soothes, pleads and does a hundred other things which can not be understood in terms of phonetic categories alone. Bharata, therefore, added a new category to those he had inherited. This was the concept of "kaku". "Kaku" may be compared to the notion of "dhvani", propounded by Anandavardhana to speak about language as evocation as distinct from language as information, command or analysis. Bharata, unlike Anandavardhana, does not debate or argue his point. He merely enunciates the notion of "kaku",Üd1[1]Ü borrowing the musical concepts of "svara" and "sthana" in order to explicate it and to talk of its various modes and types. "Sthana", in this context, means the various registers, ©© low, medium,

high, over which the voice ranges in affective speaking as much as in singing. "Svara" stands for musical notes or tones, Speech, inevitably, uses these too. Unlike song, "Svaras" in speech remain vague approximations to musical tones, unclear and subsidiary to linguistic communication.^{1/411/2} Yet an actor should remain aware of "sthana" and "svara" if he wants to command expressive speech and wield it as an art.

Music, too, was an integral part of theatre as it is of film today. Bharata's theatre used music both as background effect, as is common to all filmmaking, and as songs like in Hindi films. The sastrically articulated form of music in Bharata's days was the form known as "gandharva". It was an ancient form, born out of the still more ancient "sama", and said to be the progenitor of all other contemporary forms. Its very thorough, analytically rich, "sastra", was the basic framework within which all later forms were understood and analyzed.^{1/411/3} Like the "sastriya" music of today, "gandharva" was a very formal art. It was non-representational while the soul of drama is "anukarana". To become an "uparajaka" of drama, to lose its own individual voice in the totality of forms that constituted drama (to echo Abhinava once more who uses in this context the phrase:

"natya-samgri-madhyanimajita-nijasvara"^{1/411/4}), it was necessary that "gandharva" be changed both in its form and conception. Phonetics became "pathya" by the addition of an extra element, "kaku". To turn "gandharva" into "gana" or "dhruva" terms in the "natyasastra" for theatrical songs Bharata, in a manner of speaking, stands it on its head, inverts it. Gandharva was defined as: "svara-tala-padatmakam" "consisting of patterns of "svara", associated with "tala" and "sung" to padas words." "Pada" was in this group a partner only in name. It could be dispensed with, as in the instrumental playing of "gandharva" or become a string of nonsense syllables such as "jhanthum", "dingle", "titijhala", "kucajhala", parallel to the modern

nom©tom.¼1¼5 Even meaningful words, were in "gandharva•, mere pegs to hang the music on. "Gandharva• was, obviously, analogous to modern "dhrupad• or "khyal•. It could not be used in "natya• as such. Imagine a Hindi film hero singing a love song to his beloved in "dhrupad•. And I am not just trying to amuse, Bharata's theatre did, indeed, use song in ways that the Hindi film uses them. The genealogy of Hindi films, in fact, goes back to Bharata in more ways than this. However, to return to "gandharva•. It was used in "natya• through "dhruva•, Bharata's name for "natya• © songs. "Dhruva• transmuted "gandharva• totally, in spirit and form.

This could only be done by letting "svara• and "tala• be dominated by "pada•, that is the sung text. This, in fact is how Bharata defines "dhruva•: "A "dhruva•," he says, 'should be so composed that its music has an affinity with the meaning (of the sung text); it should be able to project the meaning.'"¼1¼6 In "dhruva•, as opposedÜd1[1]Ü to "gandharva• "svara• and "tala• were at the service of "pada•, they were there to lend the power of melody and rhythm to the sentiments expressed in the sung text. To change the independent spirit of "gandharva• in this manner and make it an "uparanjaka• of "natya•, necessitated structural changes in "gandharva•; it called for a different approach to form. Bharata has a fairly long section on how "gandharva• forms are to be converted to "dhruva•.¼1¼7 He gives us certain rules to be followed. Let me take up the more important ones that reveal his approach. There were to begin with two important negative rules: (1) "varna©prakarsa• is to be avoided in "dhruva•. (2) certain "alankaras• should not be used.¼1¼8 Let me explain: "Varna©prakarsa• means, "stretching a syllable." This is common enough in "dhrupad• and "khyal• and was evidently, common in "gandharva•, too. It is a typically musicªoriented approach to a sung text. In singing a word, say "rama," the singer will often start weaving a melodic pattern on the vowel "a," thus stretching it, prolonging its duration

inordinately before coming to "m" © the dominant impression on the listener's ears, resultingly, is that of a musical movements and not of the "word• "rama." If this process is repeated on many syllables of a longer passage, such as, to take a random example, ""ban calat rama raghurai•" ("Rama, the king of the dynasty of Raghu, walks towards the forest"), the musical content will tend to overpower the linguistic purport totally. This is not usually to be desired in songs which are embedded within a dramatic action, whose main intent is to convey certain meanings.Üd1[1]Üœ

Another thing that could "distort" a syllable was the use of certain kinds of melodic figures © "alankaras•. Bharata names "alankaras• which were not to be used in "dhruva•, or at least, not to be used with their full force.¼1¼9 Besides these negative rules © they were clearly more like rules of the thumb © Bharata also hints at certain positive ones. One such was that gandharva "svara•©forms (these were strict, inflexible, hieratic forms known as "jatis•) were to be used only through their more popular, more flexible derivatives (such as the "grama©ragas•, to which our own "ragas• are historically related). Another was that "gandharva^atalas• which were as strict and inflexible, as purely "musical" as the "gandharva©svara•©forms, were to be so molded for the purposes of "dhruva•, that the contours of "tala• were to follow the "chanda• © the meter © of a sung poem.¼2¼0 All the rules, in fact, boiled down to a single principle: get the right tune to suit the song in the given context; in other words, to use the phrase Bharata himself uses in many contexts about different arts, compose ""yatha©rasa•", as the "rasa• dictates.¼2¼1 Make it, in Abhinava's words, "uparanjaka• to the theatrical whole.

In "dhruva• or "gana• we have a small composite unit where two different arts, in this case poetry and music, become fused into one, in order to form what might be called a subsystem within the totality of "natya•. I call "dhruva• a sub©system because it was

geared towards a larger totality. All fusions of music and poetry where both these arts yet retain their individuality (unlike "gandharva" or "khyal" or "dhrupad") as in certain "ghazal" forms (here Begum Akhtar comes to my mind) or the great "Vasinava padavali kirtan" of Bengal are not sub-systems but wholes in their own right. Abhinava remarks that a "dhruva" was not quite satisfactory outside the "natya".^{1/2} A contemporary example may bring the point home better. Take a Hindi film song. We may like it on its own, but if we watch it on the T.V. with the film-scene into which it was woven we do feel that something is "added" to it, making it richer. Hence the popularity of T.V. programmes such as "Citrahara". A good Begum Akhtar "ghazal", however, forms a fused whole in itself, not needing any thing more to enrich or "complete" it.

Dance was another important ingredient in natya. It was, in the form of "nrta", an ancient well-schematized art, similar in this respect to "gandharva". Also like "gandharva", it was a formal, non-representational art. It presented the same problem to Bharata: How was it to be made integral to "natya" which, unlike it, was "anukarana"-oriented? Indeed, in the case of "nrta", Bharata is more articulately aware of this basic aesthetic problem. We find him expressing the problem at the end of a charming little story, a myth, related at the beginning of the fourth chapter. Bharata having created a form of "natya", a "samavakara" called "Amrtamanthana", showed it to the gods and demons who enjoyed it greatly (partly because it was an enactment of a great deed of their own doing). Satisfied, Brahma proposed that a "natya" should now be shown to "Siva", the great critic. So Brahma, Bharata and his troupe, all went to beautiful Himalayas where "Siva" has his home. A "dima", another form of "natya", called "Tripuradaha" (with a story from Siva's own deeds) was presented before him. Siva was pleased. But he made a suggestion. He said that he and created

a dance which should be incorporated into "natya" as part of its prologue called "purvaranga" where it could be associated with "gitika" © songs.^{1/21/3} This would, he adds, lend color to the proceedings and the meanings of the songs, too, could thus be represented through "abhinaya" gesture and mime.^{1/21/4} He then asks his disciple "Tandu" to describe this dance and explain it to Bharata. A long manual on this dance, termed "nrta" and also "tandava" (since it was taught by "Tandu"), follows © Chapter 4, verses 19 to 260. At the end of the description, from which it is clear that what is being described is a pure, non-representational art form, the "rsis" to whom Bharata was relating

his "sastra", put to him these questions: "Abhinaya" was created by the wise so that meanings may be grasped; why was the "nrta" created? What condition does it depend upon? for it has no connection with the meaning of a "gitika" © song, nor does it convey or represent ("bhavayati") any meaning whatsoever."^{1/21/5} The "rsis" were quick to discern that "abhinaya" and "nrta" were quite different in intent and this for two reasons. Firstly, "abhinaya" and "nrta" were quite different in intent and this for two reasons. Firstly, "abhinaya" was intimately connected with meanings, that is, textual meanings of a song (or a script) which it conveyed or rendered through gestures and mime; "nrta" had no such connections with any text, it created an independent aesthetic world through body-movements and gestures. Secondly, "abhinaya", like "natya" itself, was an "anukarana", it imitated "lokasvabhava", the human condition; it depended on this "anukarana", for without "anukarana" there could be no such category as "abhinaya". What conditions, what "svabhava", the "rsis" ask, does "nrta" depend upon? The implication is clear: "nrta" creates its own "condition," it does not depend on any other.

The "rsis" had asked these questions in the context of the "purvaranga" where the aim of the performance was ritualistic, no

"anukaran" oriented. The forms employed were gandharva and "nrta".

"Nrta", as the story we have related earlier suggests, was introduced later: Siva asked Bharata to "add" it to the "purvaranga". The "rsis" failed to see the logic of this addition. How was "nrta", an art as independent and non-representational as "gandharva" to be associated integrally with "gandharva"? Bharata really gives no answer to this question. Abhinava denies any integral relation. He speaks of the association of these two independent arts through an interesting metaphor; They are, he says, like two kings who happen to march together, with their independent armies towards a common enemy.^{1/21/6}

"Nrta", then, could not even be fused with "gandharva", another purely formal art like itself. How was it, then, to be orchestrated into "natya"? In order to understand how "nrta" became "natya" "samagri", a part of the dramatic whole, it would, I think, be helpful to become acquainted with Bharata's concept of the "natya" "dharmi". "Natya" was an "anukarana" of the world, especially, the human condition, "lokasvabhava".^{21/7} But it made no attempt to replicate the world. What it presented was a world transformed through imagination, the artistry and devices that playwrights and the directors of plays could command. This transformed world and the means by which the transformation was made were both called "natya" "dharmi" "having traits peculiar to "natya". "Natya" "dharmi" was based on "loka" "dharma", "traits belonging to the world of men," yet it created a world of its own. ^{1/21/8} It was an idealized world presented in a stylized form. Ordinary gestures were heightened and rendered with the grace of dance.^{1/21/9} This opened the door for "nrta" to enter into the realm of "abhinaya". Bharata counts "nrta" to enter into the realm of "abhinaya". Bharata counts "nrta" to enter into the realm of "abhinaya". Bharata counts "nrta" as one of the three elements ("vastus") of "abhinaya".^{1/31/0} "Nrta" was amalgamated into "asbhinaya" not only

indirectly, by imparting extra grace to the bodily actions and expressions needed by actors on the stage, thus making the whole "abhinaya", the entire tone of presentation "natya" © "dharmi". It was also used to enrich what might be termed the 'language of gestures', used as part of "abhinaya". "Abhinaya" has many aspects. Some are more strictly "anukarana" © based than others. Projecting human feelings, emotions, states of mind, through the exacting art of reproducing the physical signs, facial expressions, almost involuntary bodily movements or gestures that normally accompany the, is a major part of "abhinaya" and is patently "anukarana"©based. So is mime, the reproduction of a, mainly, voluntary action. Apart from these, "abhinaya" also includes that gamut of gestures, borrowed or reproduced from "loka", that are like language, fixed conventional symbols given a certain meaning. Raising the thumb as an indication of victory for example. This is a "conventional" gesture, rooted in a particular culture, it is symbolic of victory, it "means" "victory." It may mean nothing in another culture or might convey quite another meaning. In many parts of India, thus, the same raised thumb, especially if also moved from left to right, might mean "look how I have duped you." Such gestures are, obviously, very different from those that imitate an "action" or those that imitate "signs" of mental states. All "abhinaya" uses such gestures as are available from "loka". Bharat's "abhinaya" added to the available vocabulary of the language of gestures by incorporating into it many "nrtta"©gestures and assigning them meanings. We are familiar with such usages from the Bharata©inspired "abhinaya" of Bharata "Natyam" or Oddisi. In fact, in these styles of dance, we may see the same gestures in a purely "nrtta" manner and also in "abhinaya", where they are used to project the meanings of the words in a song. Such a usage could be regarded as a part of the "natya"©dharmi" for the function of "natya"©dharmi" was not only to idealize and stylize, but also to incorporate all such devices and conventions which any theater

must use, if it aims at representing the "loka" on a stage. thus the "natya@dharma" comprised the use of "svagata" (something said loudly to oneself which other characters do not hear but the audience does); "akasabhasita" (when a character speaks to someone off the stage himself speaking both his own words and that of the other); "kaksya@vibhaga" and the like. To these were added the conventional meanings given to "nrta" gestures, sometimes on the basis of a slight similarity with something in the "loka".

In "nrta", body movements had no meaning beyond themselves, they had nothing to "say". Incorporated in "abhinaya", which is essentially "anukarana" dependent, they acquired or were given a meaning beyond themselves. "Nrta" thus became an "uparajaka" of "natya", helping to render it "natya@dharma" acquiring, in the process a new, transformed significance in the new context.

"Natya@dharma" theater employed not only "nrta", but, understandably, also music. Music, indeed, is a normally accepted "uparajaka" of all theater, even the most "lokadharmi", such as the "realistic" theater of the modern west. In Bharata's theater, music was employed in the form of "dhruva" or "gana" and "vadya" © terms Bharata uses in his "sangraha". "Dhruva" we have already discussed. It was something we might consider extremely "natya@dharma", oriented as we are to western theatric practice. "Vadya" was instrumental music played as back@groundÜd1[1]Ü accompaniment.¼3¼2 We have seen how "dhruva" could be considered a sub@whole within the "natya" totality. Another sub@whole was "abhinaya". "Abhinaya" included "nrta" as well as "pathya", which we discussed when speaking of Bharata's notion of "kaku". "Abhinaya", "dhruva", "vadya" and "pathya" together formed a larger whole for which Bharata uses the term "vrtti".¼3¼3 (literally, "the manner of being or doing") is a very important concept in the "Natya@sastra". the word "vrtti" is as difficult to translate as "rasa". There is no

equivalent term in western languages for this important concept.

It was a large circle of organically associated forms which together comprised the "performance" aspect of a play, the total manner and style of stage presentation, its overall weave and texture. Bharata, unlike Aristotle, considered performance, or "prayoga" as he called it, essential to drama. Achieving the right "vrtti" was the soul of "prayoga". Bharata recognizes four "vrttis", relating each to appropriate "rasas". Though clearly a mix, a "vrtti" had a character, a temper, a savor of its own. Like all good aesthetic wholes, it was not just a sum of its parts but something more, something magically more. No wonder Bharata has a myth about how "vrttis" were created in divine action and play.^{1/3/4}

"Vrtti", like the parts which constituted it, was "anukarana"-oriented. It was an evocative depiction of the human condition,

"lokasvabhava". It was inevitably tied down to a narrative, to something happening, hence to a script. But the narrative content of a "vrtti" could be weak, thin or flimsy, giving "vrtti" an almost independent status and stature of its own.^{Üd1[1]Ü}

Let me give you an example of "vrtti", for, fortunately, we can still experience something like "vrtti" in performance. A Bharat Natyam or an Oddisi piece in "abhinaya" form displays a composite art parallel to "vrtti". It is a mix containing music, song,

"nrta", mime, gestures and its aim is to depict "lokasvabhava", situations or episodes of human sentiment and emotion. Witness, for example, an "Oddisi" piece rendered to a Jayadeva "astapadi", the one, let us say which sings of Radha's tryst with "Krsna", her futile, frustrating wait, her anger, her "viraha", and what we have is a "vrtti". But we still do not have "natya" as conceived in

Bharata's scheme.^{1/3/5} What is lacking is an adequate plot, a story depicting human "action", not just human sentiment. "Vrtti", though inconceivable without a human story, lacks the proper backbone of "itivrtta".

"Itivṛtta", literally, "this is what happened." was Bharata's name for the dramatic plot, which was to be enacted through one or more "vṛttis". The final success of "prayoga" or performance lay in the achievement of an adequate "vṛtti", but "prayoga" was only one side of the coin that was "natya". The other was "itivṛtta". An adequate "itivṛtta" demanded adequate action. It had to be plotted as a story of human effort directed towards a desirable goal.^{1/316} In the best of plays, the types known as "nataka" and "prakarana", in which the "natya" of Bharata revealed its full powers, the action progressed from seed to fruition in five stages growing from small beginnings to great results as in the "Sakuntalam" where the casual love and dalliance of a king matures into a profound awakening and the birth of a great emperor. The "itivṛtta" was as "natya" as "prayoga". One major "natya" element in "itivṛtta" was the rule that an action must end with the attainment of its goal. All plots were success stories. There could be hurdles, sorrows, but no failures, tragedy was not accepted as a form of "itivṛtta".

Plotting an action was central to "natya", but "natya" was also "evocation" of "lokasvabhava", not merely its depiction through action. It aimed at producing "rasa". In this the "vṛttis" were more important than the action and plot, though naturally the "vṛttis" had to function within the plot, as parts of it. The "vṛttis" were, in fact, sufficient in themselves to evoke "rasa". the Oddisi "abhinaya" piece, danced to Jayadeva's "astapadi" that I mentioned earlier, evokes "rasa", "srngara" in this case, but it is not "natya". It is miserably lacking in action and plot. the Bharata Natyam too is not Bharata's "natya", though it similarly employs "vṛtti" and evokes "rasa". "Rasa", therefore, could not be definitive of Bharata's "natya"; a "nataka" or a "prakarana" or a similar form (Bharata names ten types) rich both in "prayoga" and "itivṛtta" was what Bharata meant by "natya".^{1/317} Yet "vṛtti", though

insufficient by itself, singly or in combination, to form "natya•
 was sufficient to evoke "rasa•. It was the smallest unit into
 which "natya• or at least its "prayoga• aspect could be analyzed. ^{Üd1[1]Ü}
 It also fulfilled the other requirement essential for "natya•,
 namely, a "natya•dharmi• recreation of the human condition.
 Consequently, a major part of Bharata's effort in the "Natyasastra• leads up to the making of
 "vrttis•: he first describes its
 discrete building blocks, the various arts with which it was
 built up, and then the principles for putting them together into
 the composite whole that constituted a "vrtti•. Indeed Bharata's
 "sastra• as a "prayoga•sastra• may be characterized as a system for
 putting together different arts in order to form viable "vrttis•.

Bharata speaks of only four "vrttis•, but this was a prescriptive
 limitation, almost a fiat. The theatric usage he had in mind
 evidently did not need any more "vrttis•. His system, however, is
 a system of infinite possibilities. He does not give us specific
 forms but general ways of achieving them. He explores rules and
 principles for forming "vrttis•. Instructively, even the four
 "vrttis• he describes in some detail, are described in general
 terms. Concrete formations were left to the judgement and
 creative skill of the "prayoktr• the director though in this
 process, actually crystallized forms handed down from tradition
 must have played a great formative role as they do in classical
 music today. But as in classical music today, the "system• within
 which forms were made and understood was, essentially, a system
 of possibilities. However, the various arts with which a "vrtti•
 was built up were each, as we have seen, a realm unto itself.
 Many of these were not "anukarana•oriented, they had no relation ^{Üd1[1]Ü}
 to "lokasvabhava• and thus could not aim at evoking "rasa•, because
 "rasa•, in Bharata's definition, cannot be aroused by a nonrepresentational art form. Hence the
 occasion for the question
 asked by the "rsis• concerning the relevance of "nrta• to "natya•.

Significantly, the analytical approach Bharata adopts in describing "nṛtta• is, in a crucial sense, very different from the one adopted in describing "natya•. The approach to the analysis of "natya• is fundamentally "holistic": "Vṛtti•, the smallest viable structural unit constitution "natya•, was a whole composed of smaller wholes such as the "dhruva•; "vṛtti• was a composite structure "made up• of structures borrowed from different 'independent' realms. Also, a "vṛtti• was outward looking in the sense that it could not be viable, could not even be comprehended as a "vṛtti•, unless it could be related to "rasa• and the "anukarana• of "lokaśvabhava•. "Nṛtta•, on the otherhand, has been analyzed by Bharata through, what may characterized as a "matrkā approach. A "nṛtta@matrkā, a term Bharata himself uses, was the name given to the smallest "atomic" structure to which "nṛtta• forms could be reduced. Bharata delineates a repertoire of such atomic structures which could be combined to form larger formations known as "karana• and "angahara•. "Angaharas• were formed with "karanas• and were more "complete" forms, which in combinations produced "nṛtta• wholes. Various such wholes were possible, since "nṛtta•, as much as "natya•, was a system of possibilities. This idea comes out explicitly in Abhinava who comments that "karanas• could, inÜd1[1]Ü principle, be infinite, even though Bharata deliberately restricted their number to 108 as he wanted to describe only certain specific "angaharas•.¼3¼8 These were to "angaharas• necessary for the "nṛtta• rendered in the "purvaranga•, which was both a dance and a ritual and as ritual its forms were fixed and determinate.

"Vṛtti•, being a representational form, could not be understood without being related to "rasa• and "anukarana•. But "nṛtta• was non^arepresentational it needed no reference outside of itself in order to be viable, to make artistic "sense". A "nṛtta@matrkā, therefore, had to be understood as a self@contained atomic

structure, a unit of significance, in itself. Consequently this is how Abhinava defines a "karana" another term for the "nrtta"matrka: ¼3¼9 "Karana is an act. But of what is it an act? It is an act of "nrtta", of the body in movements which are executed gracefully ("vilasaksepa"). (Hence) "Karana" is an act different from those made with intention to acquire something beneficial or discard something harmful.... One unitary act ("eka kriya") executed from one point of space to another "right" ("samucita") point, is a "karana". ¼4¼0 We clearly have here the concept of an atomic "nrtta" movement which, being a non-utilitarian "art" movement, has no reference to "lokasavabhava".

The "matrka" © or "karana" © approach to analyzing structure within a system was not limited to "nrtta". It was also used in phonetics, which analyzed all speech sounds into a finite number of atomicÜd1[1]Ü phonemes, the "varna"©matrka" capable, in principle, of infinite combinations. A similar analysis was made by Bharata (his, at least, is the earliest example we have) of percussion playing ("puskara vadya"), an art which, apparently, could be as sophisticated and "independent" an art as it is today. Bharata speaks of sixteen "vak"©karanas©bols" we call them today in hindustani music © different "basic" sounds that he lists: "ka" "Kha" "ga" "gha" "ta" "tha" "da" "dha" "ta" "tha" "da" "dha" "ma" "ra" "la" "ha", which in various combinations made on the basis of "tala", "laya", "yati" result in infinite patterns. ¼4¼1

I must now end but I can not resist the temptation to add a few remarks, make some brief reflections and raise a question or two inspired by Bharata's endeavor. His formulation of "natya", or rather "natyas"© since his conception has ample room for alternate formations © is itself an example of the "vrtti" approach practiced in a grand manner. Whatever he describes, he relates integrally to "natya". We have discussed a few examples, but there are

others: imaginative literature and psychology, to speak of two more. In discussing "kavya" © imaginative writing © used in composing the script of a play, Bharata keeps constantly advising the "kavi", the poet, to design his narrative, plot, style, diction even his versification in such a way as to be appropriate for "natya". He did not want the poet to be carried away by the demands of his own art. He tells him to beware of getting lost in the play of language or imagery or "alankaras" for their own sake.^{1/41/2} His interesting thoughts on psychology, as reflected in his discussion of "bhavas" and their role in "rasas", deserve close attention on their own. But, significantly, in his description, "bhava" is inseparable from "abhinaya" (and thus "natya"). Even his explanation of the meaning of the word "bhava" (otherwise meaning "feeling," "emotion," "sentiment" and the like) reflects this dual understanding. He explains "bhava" less as a manner of "being" than a manner of "showing" or representation. In fact, his definition of "bhava" could also be a definition of "abhinaya".^{1/41/3}

"Natya" formulated as a grand "vrtti" was also a grand "anukarana", the grandest possible representation of the world in art, providing an experience almost as direct as of the world itself (Abhinava therefore calls "saksatkalpa" "direct©like"). Yet in this representation were orchestrated many arts which were non-representational. They acquired representational meaning only as part of a "vrtti". Structures of pure music and dance, woven into systems of their own, had not only to be carefully selected, but even transformed before they could become parts of a "vrtti"©whole. Bharata tells us how "pure" structures were transformed for this purpose. He describes only one side of what must have been a two©way process as we know, for example, from the history of music. A structural transformation in art, though made for the sake of transference into quite another art with a different aesthetic goal, is yet bound to have a molding effect on the

original art itself, even if it does not effect its non-representational intent.

The very possibility of the transference of a structure from a system of pure art into an "anukarana"-oriented "vrtti" accosts us with a fundamental question: "how can pure non-representational structure acquire any representational meaning at all?" True, the same structure as part of different "vrttis" could acquire different "meanings" since different "vrttis" were connected with different "rasas", yet even allowing room for ambiguity, the question still remains, for not any structure could become part of any "vrtti". A structure had to have some "affinity" with the "vrtti" into which it was transposed or else there could be no justification for choosing one structure rather than another as more "appropriate." But on what principle can one gauge the "affinity" between forms of very different character? Bharata forces us to ask this question without suggesting an answer. I too, shall not go into it here (which, of course, is not to say that I can). I must remark, though that the question is not limited to the attempt made in the "Natya-sastra" which, however, must be thanked for suggesting it clearly or even aesthetics in general. It has larger ramifications. Many of our own modern "sastras" aim at a "vrtti"-like approach: such disciplines from the social sciences as history, sociology or anthropology for example. These are meaning-oriented "human" disciplines that amalgamate the results of many others, pressing them to their own cognitive aims. A historian takes pride in being the master "sutradhara" who can envision the whole range of disparate human activities within a single "vrtti"-like amalgamated meaningful whole.

He speaks, for example, of the 'spirit of an age'. An 'age', in his notion, is a "vrtti"-like whole produced by the combination of multifarious human activities and pursuits. The 'spirit' of an

'age' like the "rasa" of a "vrtti" ties different realms together into a meaningful whole, infusing into each part the character of the whole.

Yet though analogous to "rasa" and "vrtti", the idea of the spirit of an age is much more ambitious. An age is an all-encompassing whole engulfing every single human activity in every detail without, ideally, a residue. The spirit of the age can be perceived in every limb of this cosmic entity and if, perchance something is admitted to have remained untouched by this omnipresent 'spirit', it also remains unexplained and not quite understood in a historian's scheme of things, an embarrassment to his vision. The question of affinity between different realms is not really raised. Affinity is taken for granted before it is discovered with the assumption that if things are together they must have an affinity.

"Rasa" in Bharata's framework is in an important sense different from such a conception of 'spirit'. And this is because "vrtti" is not an all-encompassing whole like 'age'. The different, discrete activities with which a "vrtti" is constructed do not lose themselves entirely in a "vrtti". In order to fit into a "vrtti" an activity, in Bharata's scheme, has to be transformed in significant ways, thus creating a new entity out of the old, a new entity with a new goal, modified rules of formation a new "affinity"; something designed not as an independent activity, but as a part of another, in many ways, an alien whole. Meaningful discourse about this new entity needs new concepts that must focus upon it as part of an alien whole. Activities that merge into a "vrtti" thus yet retain their separate identity. What merges into a "vrtti" is some thing carved out of an autonomous realm which continues its independent existence with its own structures and its own world of discourse. Thus, for

example, when "dhruva" is carved out of "gandharva" and molded to fit "natya", "gandharva" continues in its own character, holding its own sway. Bharata never lets us forget this. Therefore the universality of "rasa" in his framework is limited because the territory of "vrtti" too is limited. "Rasa" can apply to an activity only in as much as it is part of a "vrtti". It can be used to understand "dhruva" but not "gandharva" (or music as such). Later theorists made "rasa" into a much more cosmic concept, a defining trait of the entire realm of the aesthetic, embracing all the arts equally in their entirety. Constructing unifying concepts that embrace whole gamuts of human activities or entire realms of knowledge is a natural temptation. A concept, after all, has to be general in application. One tends to make it more and more, so weaving a universal system around it. There is no denying the appeal of universal concepts and systems that tie up a whole cosmic range of diversity into a single monolithic bundle. But this does injustice to the complexity of phenomena, glossing over what does not fit and distorting others to squeeze them into a straitjacket.

Bharata's approach is refreshingly distinct in this respect. In amalgamating different realms he remained aware that what was achieved was just another realm, a "vrtti", which though it sought to recreate reality did not unify different realms into a larger all-inclusive whole but only created one more realm among others. Therefore he conceived of a multiplicity of such combinations: "vrtti" is not one but many. Reality could be recreated in many ways. Moreover, the "vrtti"-scheme of forming new wholes and discoursing about them was relevant only to realms carved out of other realms where a "matrka" scheme of discourse was more germane. These were 'formal' realms that could be significantly analyzed into 'atomic' "matrka" units. These were realms that do not reflect the world, they do not recreate reality and resist

assimilation into another which does. It is possible for a
"vrtti", in Bharata's scheme to assimilate "matrka"-oriented
structures, but never an entire "matrka"-oriented realm, that is, a
formal realm where the analytical "matrka" approach is significant
to discourse.ÜdÜ

Ã*(ÃNOTESf

1. The "Natyasastra" speaks of "rasa" in terms that seem to indicate that the idea of "rasa" and of the various distinct "rasa" was an already established one. See "Natyasastra" (henceforth also sometimes referred to as N.S.) 6, 15-16 : all our references to the N.S., will be to the Gawked Oriental Series, Baroda, edition of the text, published in four volumes with the only extant commentary on it, the "Abhinavabharati" of Abhinavagupta. The "rasa"s, this passage says, were taught by Druhina. This could be the name of a pre-Bharata "acarya", but is in most likelihood used as a synonym for 'Brahma', the creator, who is also the creator of "natya". The name Druhina is used for Brahma in the N.S, more than once: see, for example, N.S. 1, 81-82 and 1,127.

Yet even though Bharata inherited the idea of "rasa" from predecessors, all later thinkers consider him the first "acarya" in this matter, taking his formulations as the basis for their theorizing.

2. Although Aristotle speaks of six distinct constituents of tragic drama - plot, character, diction, though, spectacle and song - he picks out one element, plot. And so he could say: "the power of tragedy is independent both of performance and of actors, and besides, the production of spectacular effects is more the province of the property - man than the playwright". (On the Art of poetry, tr. T.S.Dorsch in Penguin Books, 1965, p.Üd1[1]Ü 41). Indeed, Aristotle treats drama chiefly as a playwright's art and thus could assert: "tragedy fulfills its own special function even without the help of action, and just in the same way as epic, for its quality can be seen from reading it " (ibid, p, 74).

3. "ko drstantah". "atraha - yatha hi

nanavyanjanasadhidravvasamyocadrasanisattih•. "Yatha hi -
gudaoibhir - dravyairvyanianairausadibhisca sadavadayo rasa -
nirvartyante tatha nanabhavopagata api sthayino bhava
rasatvamapnuvantiti• : N.S. 6, prose passage following verse 31.

Abhinava commenting on the word "'sadava•', remarks, "'sadavadaya
iti lokaprasiddhebhyaḥ parasparaviviktebhyo
madhuratiktamlalavana-katukasayebhyo misrebhyasca vilaksanah
sadavasabdavacyah•".

In this passage Bharata speaks of "rasa• as an admixture of "bhavas•
alone, but "natya• was a much more varied mixture, a combination of
different objects not only of the same kind, but of different
categories altogether. In a later passage, as we shall see,
Bharata uses the metaphor of an "alatacakra• (a firebrand) to speak
of "natya• as a combination of objects very different in nature.
The present metaphor can also serve the same purpose, perhaps
more aptly.

4. "na tajjinanam na tacchilpam na sa vidya na sa kala/ nasau
yogo na tatkarma natyesmin yanna drsyate•// N.S. 1,116. WeÜd1[1]Ü
translate 'yoga' as 'application', following Abhinava who
explains 'yoga' in this passage as "'yojana•', that is,
'application'. The various skills and knowledges, he adds, are to
be applied in "natya• in various combinations. The combination can be
simple, as of different things from the same field (of "bhavas•,
for example: see footnote 3 above) or complex, that is of
different things from distinct fields of activity and knowledge :
"'yogo yojanam tesaeva jnanadinam kalantanam
svabhedairanyonyasvabhedaih•".

5. "Evam ganam ca vadyam ca natyam ca vividhasrayam• /
"alatacakrapratimam kartavyam natyayoktrbhiḥ• // N.S.28,7.
Here the use of "'natya•' as distinct from "'gana•' and "'vadya•'
implies that in the admixture of things that produced "natya•, song

and music could be dispensed with: there could be "natya• without them. Some theorists, as Abhinava points out, had on the strength of this passage opined that "natya• could be viably formed without song and dance: ""anye tu manyante © gitatodyavihinadapi prayogadpathyamanadapi dasarupakad bhavati siddhirtyanena sucitam•." This seems a reasonable interpretation. Yet Bharata gave great importance to song and music in his scheme, treating them at an extensive detail. This justifies Abhinava in commenting that "natya• in Bharata's scheme remains incomplete without song and music: ""tavati hyaparipurnata natyasya pariªpurnam ca sarvanugrahi natyasavarupamabhidhitisam muneh•" (on the N.S. passage quoted above).

6. "Yasmadvididhasrayam bhinnendriyagrahyavididhakriyarupam tasmadyatnenasyaikatatatsampadya yenaikabuddhivisayata samajikasya gacchet•. Abhinava on N. S. 28,7.

7. "alatatejahkano na hi vastutol yugapadanekadesasambandhi laghavayatnena to tathatatha samyamapaditam• : Abhinava on N. S. 28,7.

8. "na sakyamasya natyasya gantumantam kathancana•/
 "ksamadbahutvajjnananam silpanam vapyanantatah•//
 "ekasyapi na vai sakyastvanto jnanarnavasya hi•/
 "gantum kim punaranyesam jnananamarthatattvatah•//
 N. S. 6,6©7.

9. Thus Bharata speaks of 'three different out©lays for the theatre hall conceived in accordance with the "sastra•': "trividhah sannivesasca sastratah parikalpitah•. "Sastra• here obviously refers to "vastusastra•, the science of architecture. His entire treatment of the subject shows his knowledge of the science.

10. "preksagrhanam sarvesam tasmanmadhyamamisate•/

"yavatpathyam ca geyam ca tatra sravyataram bhavet•//

N.S. 2,21.

11. Bharata's "sangraha• is contained in the following "karika•:ÜdÜ

"rasa bhava hyabhinayah dharmi vrttipravrttayah•/

"siddhih svarastathatodyam ganam rangasca sangraha•//

N.S. 6,10.

"Pathya• is not named here but indicated by the term "svara•.

Earlier in chapter one, Bharata names "pathya• as an essential element in "natya•: "jagraha pathyamrgvedat...• (N.S. 1,17). Later in chapter 17, where the matter is taken for detailed description, it is indeed, described under "pathya•. This makes the use of another term for it in the "sangraha• puzzling and incongruous, a serious fault in a "sastric• treatise. Such faults in the "Natyasastra• are not uncommon, and Abhinava who tries to justify them in many cases © the "Natyasastra• was not only a "sastra• but also a canon © sometimes gives up exasperatingly. In this case the use of "svara• for "pathya• in the "sangraha• though not justified and even confusing© for "svara• would more naturally point at music rather than speech© yet seems significant. "Svara• distinguished ordinary "pathya• from dramatic "pathya•. The notion of "kaku•, central to understanding "pathya• as dramatic speech, can not be understood without bringing in "svara•, as Abhinava points out© "iha kakusu svara eva vastutah upakarinah• (Abhinava on N.S. 17, prose passage following verse 102a).

12. "udattanudattasvaritakampitarupataya svaram yadrakti©

pradha©na©tvamanurananamayam tattiyagenoccamadhyam©

asthanasparsitvamatram pathyopayogiti darsitam. YadiÜdÜÖ hi svaragata raktih pathye pradhanyena lambyeta tada

ganakriyasau syat na pathah•. (Abhinava on N.S. 17, prose passage following verse 102a).

This may be rendered in English as follows:

"In "pathya•, "svaras• lose their own specific savor, their ringing quality, their function being only to raise the pitch of the voice or to lower it, to accentuate (a word) or shake it: the movement of the voice over the various registers is all that is needed for this purpose (and not a clear enunciation of musical tones). If the savoring of tonal values in themselves were to become important in "pathya•, it would become song; no longer remaining speech."

13. For more details on this question see my "A Study of Dattilam•, New Delhi, 1978, p. 126.

14. Distinguishing "gana•, that is theatrical music, from the pure form, "gandharva•, Abhinava remarks: "ganam tu natyasamagrimadhya^animajjitanijasvaram saphalaya iti svarupabhedo'pi•: Abhinava on N.S. 33,1, a long passage which seeks to describe and analyse the distinction between "gana• and "gandharva•. The passage has been discussed in detail in "A Study of Dattilam•, noticed in the footnote above.

ÜdÜŒ15. Bharata notes the following 'words' for "gandharva• with the remark that they were sung by Brahma himself:

"tanyaksarani vaksye yani pura brahmagitani• /
"jhantum jagatiya diginigi jhantum prathame layantare capi• /
"titijhala kucajhala madhye titikucavrdham bhavajjyesthe• //
N.S. 31, 104.

16. "Yasmadarthanurupa hi dhruva karyarthadarsika•/ N.S. 29,29.

17. N.S. 32, 1©46.

18. "saptarupagata jnyeya alankara budhaistvime• /
"naite (Sarve) dhruvasvistah sruti (Srotri) varna^a prakarsanat• //
"na hi varnaprakarsastudhruvanam siddhirisyate• /
N.S. 29, 26©27

The readings in brackets are suggested by the editor,
apparently, on the basis of Abhinava's comments.

19. "Syeno vapyathava bindurye canye'ti (tu) prkarsinah• /
"te dhruvanam prayogesu na karya svapramanatah• //
N.S. 29, 27©28.

20. The "tala• structure of "gandharva• was based on an
extraordinarily large time unit. Its forms had, besides, littleÜd1[1]Ü
in common with meters of popular verses, sung as "dhruvas•. Thus
both the "gandharva• measure and its "tala•©structure had to be
modified and molded to current metrics:

"yanyangani kalascaiva gitakantaragatani tu• /
"tani chandogatairvrttairvibhavyante dhruvasvatha• //
N.S. 29, 14.

21. He says about "dhruva•, for example:

"tatha rasakṛta nityam dhruvah prakaranasritah• /
"naksatraniva gaganam natyamaudyotayanti tah• // N.S. 32, 430

Meaning: ""Dhruvas• designed according to "rasa• in dramas,
make it resplendent like the stars in the sky." See also N.S.

32, 427; N.S. 34, 65, which says about "vadya•:

"rasasatvabhava (bhavasatva) yogan(gam) drstvakabhinayam
gatipracaramsca• /
"vadyam nityam karyam yathakramam (yatham) vadya (vṛtta)

yogajñaiḥ" • //

22. "na hi natyadbahirlayabhangaḥ "(ngya)piḥ "dhruvaganamḥ
"giyamanasukhamutapadayatiḥ Abhinava on N.S. 33,1. The printed
edition has "giyamanamukhamḥ" instead of "giyamanasukhamḥ", a
meaningless reading which we have emended. Abhinava says:
"Outside the context of drama a "dhruvaḥ song gives no pleasure".Üd1[1]Ü
He compares it to a spoilt child ("lalitaḥ) away from the company
of his doting kin and elders about whom no one is any longer
bothered: "so'yamatraḥ "lalitaḥ "ivaḥ
"gurusanghasevavaikalyadanusandhivarjastathapiḥ "naḥ "smaryateḥ. "Dhruvaḥ
then appeals only to immature minds ("sukamaramatiḥ):
"sukumaramatimevaḥ "hiḥ "pratiḥ "prayaḥ "idamḥ "pravrtatḥ.
Abhinava on N.S. 33,1.

23. "mayapidamḥ "smṛtamḥ "nṛtyamḥ "sandhyakalesuḥ "nṛtyataḥ /
"nanakaranasamyuktairangaharairvibhusitamḥ //
"purvarangavidhavasamimstvayaḥ "samyakprayojyatamḥ /
N.S. 4, 13©14
"vardhamanakayogesuḥ "gitesvasaritesuḥ "caḥ //

24. "mahagitesuḥ "caivarthansamyagevabhinesyasiḥ /
N.S. 4, 15.

25. "rsayaḥ "ucuhḥ: "yada praptyarthamarthanamḥ "tajjnairabhinayahḥ
"kṛtahḥ // "kṛtahḥ //
"kasmannṛttamḥ "kṛtamḥ "hyetatkamḥ "svabhavamapeksateḥ /
"naḥ "gitakarthasambaddhamḥ "naḥ "capyarthasyaḥ "bhavakamḥ //
N.S. 4,261©262.

26. "svapratisthiteḥ"piḥ "dvayeḥ "yenaḥ "yatsammelanayogyamḥ "tattatraḥ
"prayujyataḥ "ityetavanangangibhavahḥ. "evamḥ "satrujvalanapravrttamarsaḥ

("ttasa•) "bhimananarapatidvitayavat• © Abhinava on N.S. 4, 252.Üd1[1]Ü
(Volume 1, Page 126 of the edition we are quoting).

27. "nanabhavopasampannam• "nanavasthanataratmakam• /
"lokavrttanukaranam• "natyametatmaya• "krtam• // N.S. 1, 112.

28. " yo'yam• "svabhavo• "lokasya• "sukhaduhdhakriyatmkah• /
"so'ngabhinayasamyukto• "natyadharmi• "prakirtita• // N.S. 13,81.

For a more detailed exposition of this important concept, see my
article entitled 'The Natya as conceived by Bharata', the "New•
"Quest•, March©April, 1984. Bharata's drama was an imaginative
recreation of reality. Music and dance were integral to it. The
action shown had to be designed in a particular way, leading
always to success in an endeavour and a happy consummation. In
this way Bharata's idealized world was "natyadharmi• in a specific
sense peculiar to it. Bharata was aware of this but he was also
aware that all theatre, in as much as it is a recreation of the
world and not its replica, was bound to be "natyadharmaï• in some
essential way.

29. "ativakyakriyopetamatisattvatibhavakam• /
"lilangharabhinayam• "natyalaksanalaksitam• // N.S. 13,73.

30. "asya• "sakha• "ca• "nrttam• "ca• "tathaivankura• "eva• "ca• //
"vastunyabhinayasyeha• "vijneyani prayoktrbhih• //
N.S. 8, 15.

ÜdÜœ31. Compare Abhinava: "abhinayasya dvividha itikartavyata

lokadharmi natyadharmi ca•. "adya dvividha © cittavrttª yarpakatvenanubhavasya•, "yatha•

© ""garve'pyahamiti

tajjnairlatadesocchrita•" (N.S. 9,19) "iti•.

"kevalabahyavayavarupa va yatha padmakosasya kamapi

nirupane•. "Natyadharmyapi dvidha• © "natyopayogamula

bhutakaisikisampadanocitalaukikasobhahetuh yatha• ©

"avestitadicaturvidhakaranarupa•. "kacittvamsena
lokamupajivati yatha varnaturena hastena tatra
vyavahitena loka upajiviyate. loko hyanirdesyata©sesam
vastu nirdidiksuriḍrsam tadrsamitthambhuta©
mityavasare prayuktameva caturaih. evam janantikadau
vacyam. natasamayamatrarupa natyadharmi samayasya©
kincitkarasya kalpane prayojanabhavat.•

This interesting passage may be rendered as following:

""Abhinaya• may be accomplished in two different modes,
"lokadharmi• and "natyadharmi•. "Lokadharmi• is of two kinds. The
first consists of "anubhavas• © bodily states or actions © that
indicate a state of mind: like lifting up one's head with pride
(N.S. 9, 19). The second consists of only an outward showing, as
when one indicates a lotus flower (through one's palms and
fingers). "Natyadharmi• is also of two kinds. The first consists
of movements of pure dance such as the "avestita•, which are used
to impart an ethos of more than ordinary beauty and joy inÜd1[1]Ü
rendering the "kaisiki vrtti•. Some (stylized gestures) depend
partly upon "loka•, as the use of the hand gesture called the
"varnatura• which depends indirectly upon "loka•: for in real life,
too, a similar gesture is used when one has not been able to
observe some thing quite fully and wants to see what it is like
exactly ("tadrsamitthambhutam•). The same (kind of dependence on
"loka•) is to be found in conventions such as the "janantika• (the
aside). The "natyadharmi• is nothing but the various conventions
("samaya•) used by actors and these certainly serve a purpose (in
"natya• for their is no point in having a convention that has no
purpose."

32. One of the first things that the stage director did in
making stage ready for a show was to seat the musicians on it.

this is a practice still followed in classical dancing. Bharata calls it "kutapa@vinyasa". The instruments used, besides the voice, were flutes, harps and drums. Music was used to accompany "dhruva", some modes of accompaniment being very different from what we today know as "sangata" (for details see, "A Study of Dattilam", p. 257-259). Music also served as accompaniment to "natya" itself, without the medium of "dhruva" songs. It was in itself a major "natya@samagri" and it was expected of musicians that they would hold it, flex it to suit the ethos of the moment. Some rules of the thumb were established for the purpose and a list made of which "raga" form to use when; these lists grew to great lengths with post-Bharata "acaryas".

33. A concept related to "vrtti" is that of "pravrtti" which Bharata treats at some length (N.S. 13, 36-86). "Pravrtti" meant the different usages regarding language, dress, custom, behavior and the like of people from different regions of India. Bharata also speaks of their differences in terms of temper and taste. These had to be borne in mind while representing different regional types. "Vrtti", however, is a more universal notion. It is not concerned with representing regional lifestyles but the human condition as such. It is also, clearly, more intimately related to theater as an art: it is a "natya@dharmi" concept. "Vrtti" can be formed only in "natya" with the various means at the disposal of the "prayoktra" (the stage director). It is something to be imaginatively created, while "pravrtti" is something out there in the "loka", a raw material for "anukarana", which "vrtti" uses to create theater. Thus we find that the "pravrttis" have been subsumed by Bharata himself under "vrtti": "nanadesavesabhasacaroloka iti krtva lokanumatena vrttisamsritasya natyasya mayacaturvidhatvamabhihitam bharatyarabhati sattvati kaisiki ceti" (N.S. 13, prose passage following verse 37). Bharata says, "People live in different lands and follow different usages of language, dress and customary behavior and, therefore, in

conformity with "loka• itself, I have spoken of "natya•, which depends on "vrtti•, as being fourfold, "bharati•, "arabhati•, "sattvati• and "kaisiki• (these being the names of the four "vrttis• described by Bharata)".Üd1[1]ÜÖ

34. It is interesting that after giving us a myth about the origin of "natya• as a whole right at the beginning of the "Natya^asastra•, Bharata gives us a separate myth about the origin of

"vrtti• in the 20th chapter where he takes the topic up for a detailed treatment. The "vrttis•, according to Bharata's story, were inspired by the very first action that Lord Visnu Himself undertook when he awoke from his divine sleep. After having absorbed the creation back unto himself (during "pralaya•) the Lord slept on the serpent Sesa, floating on the Primal Cosmic Ocean ("ekamava•). He was rudely woken by two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha who wanted to fight him. A fierce fight ensued and as the three fought they exchanged rude and angry words, their bodies quickened with a turmoil of great emotions. Thus were born the three "vrttis•, "bharati•, "arabhati• and "sattvati•. The graceful, "srngara•©oriented "kaisiki• was born of the movement of laksmi as she looked on at her husband Visnu, tying her loosened hair with delicate dance©like movements. N.S. 20, 1©24.

The "Natya•, Bharata says in chapter one, was created out of the four Vedas. The "vrttis•, too, were important enough to have been provided a similar origin independently of "natya•:

"rgvedadbharati kṣipta yajurvedacca sattvati• /

"kaisiki samvedacca sesa catharvanadapi• // N.S. 20, 25.

ÜdÜÖ35. For an outline of Bharata's scheme see my article 'The Natya as Conceived by Bharata', "New Quest•, March©April, 1984.

36. S.N. 19, 1©20.

37. For an outline of Bharata's scheme see my article 'The Natya as Conceived by Bharata', "New Quest", March-April, 1984.

38. "ayam bhavah © astottare karanasate catussastika©
ranayojanaya trutitangagatya (ngagataritya)
yadyapyanantyamangaharanam tathapi pradhanadrsta
phalam pratyadhikoparaktataya dvatrimssannamato
nirdistah. Abhinava on N.S. 19-27.

39. There is confusion in the use of the terms "karana" and
"nrttamatrka". Bharata says, in a passage, that "angaharas" ©
complex "nrtta" wholes © are made up of "karana" units:
"sarvesamangaharanam nispattih karanairyatah" (N.S. 4, 29). In a
later passage he says: "yani sthanani yascaryo nrttahastas
tathaiva ca / "sa matrketi vijneya tadyogatkaranam bhavet" / (N.S.
4, 59-60).

This suggests that "karanas" themselves were made up of
"matrkas", which, one would suppose, were still smaller units. And
yet Bharata emphatically states that the "nrtta©matrka" was a
relatively complex unit consisting of two "karanas": "dveÜd1[1]Ü
nrttakarane caiva bhavato nrttamatrka" (N.S. 4, 31).

This is a confusion concerning the proper use and definition
of terms. The "Natya©sastra" does sometimes make such confusion.
The text as we have it has not passed through a very clean and
clear process of transmission. However, the "concept" of an atomic
"nrtta" unit is clear enough, whatever we may choose to call it
"karana" or "nrtta©matrka".

40. "kriya karanam". "kasya kriya ? "nrttasya". "gattranam
vilasaksepasya". "heyopadeyavisayakrihadibhyo vyatirikta ya
tatkriya karanamityarthah...
purvaksetrasamyogayagena samucitaksetrantaraprap

tiparyantataya eka kriya tatkaranamityarthah•. Abhinava on
N.S. 4, 28©30.

41. These basic sounds could themselves have various formulations, patently through different ways of producing them on a drum. Thus "'ka•' could have the forms "'ke•' "'ko•' "'kam•' as well as "'kra•' "'kla•' "'kle•' and "'klam•'. Other sounds had similar multiple formulations as Bharata notes at N.S. 34, 43©44.

Bharata speaks of the various combinations of these sounds made not only on the basis of "laya•, "tala• and "yati• but also "marga•, "lepa•, "pracara• etc. (N.S. 34,40).

42. Bharata says: "suslistasandhisamyogam suproyogam sukhasrayam•/

"mrdusabdabhidhanam ca kavih kuryattu natakam• // N.S. 19,141.ÜdÜœ Meaning: "A poet should take care to compose a "nataka• in such a way as to properly knit its various dramatic sequences together (the "sandhis• so that it can result in a good stage^aproduction ("suprayoga•). It should use a smooth language so that it is easy to perform. Elsewhere he reiterates:

"cekrditaprabhrtibhirvikrtaisca sabdairyukta
na bhanti lalita bharataprayogah• /
"yajnakriyeva rurucarmadharairghrtaktairvesya
dvijairiva kamandaludandahastaih• // N.S. 16, 127.

It is often forgotten, indeed, that Bharata's entire treatment of "kavya• is geared, like his treatment of all else, towards "natya•. His work is, by historical accident, the earliest available "sastric• work on "alankara•, but it is not perhaps representative of the state of the "sastra• as a whole during his days as modern historians of "alankara sastra• tend to deal with it. His whole treatment is so plainly "natya•©oriented that many of his rhetorical categories do not make sense without "natya•: his scheme of 36 "kavya©gunas• (Chapter 16) are palpably related to

"kavya• as designed for theater. He has obviously made a selection from available categories, inventing new ones for his own specific purpose.

43. N.S. chapter 7 begins thus: "bhavanidam vyakhyasyamah atraha bhava iti kasmāt. kim bhavantīti bhava, kim va bhavayantīti bhavaḥ? ucyate © vagangasattvo © petan kavyarthan bhavayantītiÜd1[1]Ü bhavaḥ•.

That is to say: "Now we shall delineate "bhavas•. Here it may be asked: how are they "bhavas•? Are they "bhavas• because they "are• or are they "bhavas• because they reveal (what is)? The answer is, they are "bhavas• because they "reveal• (or project) the plot and sentiments ("arthah•) or a "kavya• through such modes of ("abhinaya•) as the "vacika• (speech), the "anga• (body movements like gestures) and the "sattva• ('involuntary' physical states indicative of emotion where there is no movement or gesture, but conditions such as sweating, flow of tears, horripilation or 'goose flesh' and the like).

In this passage the word "'abhinaya•' is not actually used, but immediately after it, having stated that the verb "'bhu•' in his use of "bhava• is to be understood as used in an instrumental sense, Bharata defines "bhava• more unambiguously as:

"vibhavenahrto yo'rtho hyanubhavaistu gamyate• /

"vagangasattvabhinayaih sa bhava iti sajnītaḥ• //

"vagangamukharagena sattvenabhinayena ca• /

"kaverantaragatam bhavam bhavayan bhava ucyate• //

N.S. 7, 1©2.